

What is Claimed is:

Sub A2 7  
1. An information processing apparatus capable of transmitting information to a terminal device, comprising:

receiving means for receiving a request transmitted thereto from said terminal device;

user identifier generating means for generating a user identifier corresponding to the request;

generation source identifier storage means for storing the generation source identifier to identify the generation source of the user identifier; and

transmitting means for transmitting the generated user identifier and the stored generation source identifier to said terminal device.

2. The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said receiving means receives a request signal for requesting said information processing apparatus to issue a user password for identifying a user who operates said terminal device, and also to issue an introduction password indicating the generation source of the user password.

3. The information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said receiving means receives individual information of the user who operates said

SubA2

terminal device.

4. The information processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said receiving means receives a request signal for requesting issue of the user password and the introduction password which are used for accessing homepage information owned by another information processing apparatus, and said introduction password specifies the homepage information of said information processing apparatus which introduces the homepage information of said another information processing apparatus.

5. The information processing apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising individual information storage means for storing the received individual information.

SubA3

6. The information processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said user identifier generating means generates a user password corresponding to the received individual information, and transfers the generated user password to said individual information storage means, which then stores the transferred user password correspondingly to the individual information.

7. The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said information identifier storage

Sub A3

05781496 021201

means stores a generation source identifier to identify the homepage information.

8. The information processing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said information identifier storage means stores an introduction password as the generation source identifier to identify the homepage information.

9. The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the user identifier and the generation source identifier are used when said terminal device accesses the information owned by another information processing apparatus, and said transmitting means transmits the user identifier and the generation source identifier to said another information processing apparatus.

10. An information processing apparatus capable of transmitting homepage information to a terminal device, comprising:

a receiver for receiving a request signal transmitted thereto from said terminal device to request issue of a user password and an introduction password indicating the generation source of the user password, and also receiving user individual information transmitted from said terminal device;

a user register for storing the received individual

Sub A3

00781456 021201

information;

a user password generator for generating a user password corresponding to the received individual information and transferring the generated user password to said user register where the user password transferred thereto is to be stored correspondingly to the individual information;

an introduction password memory for storing an instruction password to identify the homepage; and

a transmitter for transmitting the generated user password and the introduction password to said terminal device.

11. An information processing apparatus capable of transmitting information to a terminal device, comprising:

receiving means for receiving a user identifier transmitted thereto from said terminal device, and also a generation source identifier indicating the generation source of the user identifier;

authenticating means for authenticating an access to the information in accordance with the received user identifier and generation source identifier; and

payment processing means for executing a process to pay a fee to the generation source, which is indicated by

Sub A3

the generation source identifier, in accordance with the result of such authentication.

12. The information processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said authenticating means comprises an input checker for deciding whether the reception of said user identifier is the first time or not; and a user identifier register for storing any past user identifier received already and registering the new user identifier decided to be the first reception by said input checker.

13. The information processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said authenticating means comprises a generation source processor for outputting either generation source information or no-generation source information in accordance with the result of a comparison between the received generation source identifier and the stored generation source identifier.

14. The information processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said generation source processor updates a point value, which corresponds to the generation source identifier indicative of the generation source, in accordance with the result of such a comparison.

15. The information processing apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising homepage information

Sub A3 —  
storage means for storing homepage information, wherein said payment processing means converts the point, which is stored in said generation source processor, into an amount of money and generating a signal for payment of the amount to the generation source indicated by the generation source identifier, said signal serving as a settlement signal which has an identifier corresponding to the homepage of a payment source, an account number corresponding to the generation source identifier, and information of the converted due amount.

16. The information processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said authenticating means comprises a correspondence register for registering the received user identifier and the generation source identifier correspondingly to each other in a data base when the received user identifier and the generation source identifier have been transferred from the information processing apparatus having an introduction source homepage to introduce the information; and an input checker for deciding, in accordance with the data base, whether the reception of said user identifier is the first time or not.

17. The information processing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said input checker makes a decision

Sub A3

as to whether the generation source identifier has been received or not, and if the result of such a decision signifies no reception, said input checker retrieves the generation source identifier, which corresponds to the user identifier, from the data base of said correspondence register.

18. An information processing apparatus capable of transmitting homepage information to a terminal device, comprising:

a receiver for receiving, from said terminal device, a user password and an introduction password indicating a generation source of the user password;

an input checker for making a decision as to whether the user password received by said receiver is the first time or not, and another decision as to whether the proper introduction password has been received or not;

a user password register for storing any user password received already by said receiver, and registering the new user password decided by said input checker as the first time;

an introduction source processor for outputting either introducer information or no-introducer information in accordance with the result of a comparison

Sub A3

between the received introduction password and the stored introduction password, and updating, in accordance with the result of such a comparison, the point value which corresponds to the introduction password indicative of the introduction source;

a homepage information memory for storing homepage information in an HTML format;

a payment processor for converting the point value, which is stored in said introduction source processor, into an amount of money, said payment processor generating a settlement signal which has an identifier corresponding to the homepage of a payment source, an account number corresponding to the introduction password, and information of the converted due amount; and

a transmitter for transmitting, to said terminal device, either the introducer information or the no-introducer information outputted from said introduction source processor, also transmitting the homepage information to said terminal device, and further transmitting the generated settlement signal to a settlement center.

19. An information processing apparatus capable of transmitting homepage information to a terminal device, comprising:

Sub A3

a receiver for receiving, from said terminal device, a user password and an introduction password indicating a generation source of the user password;

a correspondence register for registering the user password and the introduction password correspondingly to each other in a data base when the received user password and introduction password have been transferred from the information processing apparatus which owns an introduction source homepage to introduce said homepage;

an input checker for making a decision as to whether the user password received by said receiver is the first time or not, through searching the data base of said correspondence register and, if the result of such a decision signifies no reception, retrieving an introduction password, which corresponds to said user password, from the data base of said correspondence register;

an introduction source processor for outputting either introducer information or no-introducer information in accordance with the result of a comparison between the received or retrieved introduction password and the stored introduction password, and updating, in accordance with the result of such a comparison, the point value which corresponds to the introduction

SubA3

09781496-031201

password indicative of the introduction source;

a homepage information memory for storing homepage information in an HTML format;

a payment processor for converting the point value, which is stored in said introduction source processor, into an amount of money, said payment processor generating a settlement signal which has an identifier corresponding to the homepage of a payment source, an account number corresponding to the introduction password, and information of the converted due amount; and

a transmitter for transmitting, to said terminal device, either the introducer information or the no-introducer information outputted from said introduction source processor, also transmitting the homepage information to said terminal device, and further transmitting the generated settlement signal to a settlement center.

20. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request transmitted from a terminal device;

generating a user identifier corresponding to said request; and

transmitting, to said terminal device, the

Sub A3

generated user identifier and a generation source identifier which identifies a generation source of the user identifier stored in an information processing apparatus.

21. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

receiving a user identifier transmitted from a terminal device, and a generation source identifier indicating a generation source of the user identifier;

authenticating an access to information stored in an information processing apparatus, in accordance with the received user identifier and generation source identifier; and

executing, in accordance with the result of such authentication, a process for paying a fee to the generation source indicated by said generation source identifier.

09781495 024204